

Committee on Governance: Minutes
Meeting #28: May 12, 2020
Faculty Governance Branch Offices

Present: Len Albano (CEE, COG-elect), Kris Boudreau (Secretary, HUA), Tanja Dominko (Secretary of the Faculty, BBT), Tahar El-Korchi (CEE), Glenn Gaudette (BME), Arne Gericke (CBC), Mark Richman (ME), Sue Roberts (ChE), and Wole Soboyejo (Provost).

1. Prof. Gaudette called the meeting to order at 2:08; the agenda was approved.
2. New member. COG welcomed its newest member, Len Albano (CEE) whose term will officially begin on July 1.
3. Minutes. The minutes from meeting #27 were approved with modifications.
4. Elections. Four members of COG are eligible to be chair of COG. Voting for chair will be tabled until a later date. Committee terms begin on July 1.
5. Update on a Proposed Teaching Track to Tenure: Prof. Richman reminded COG of the significant progress made toward bringing a proposal to the faculty before the time of WPI's physical closure in March. The campus shutdown put further progress on hold but has amplified the need for real job security for our NTT colleagues.

A preliminary proposal for a teaching track to tenure was presented at the November 2019 faculty meeting with the intention to revise it based on feedback received and to bring it back to the faculty for their consideration by April 2020. Prof. Richman explained that based on reactions to the preliminary draft, the criteria for tenure for teaching professors will be revised in the next version of the proposal for the faculty, and the proposal will probably be broken into smaller parts for separate consideration. Earlier this spring, when COG discussed the proposal following its presentation at a faculty meeting, some members of COG voiced a preference for a meeting of tenured and tenure-track faculty to discuss the proposal. That meeting never took place before the campus shutdown. COG briefly considered the next steps: COG members will read the next version of proposal, discuss it at an early meeting in 2020-21, and then circulate it to the faculty to gather further input.

6. Update on Process for Creating and Revising Institutional Administrative Policies (PCRIAP). Last week, Profs. Gaudette, Dominko, and Provost Soboyejo spoke about this in a separate meeting. COG members asked where we are in that procedure? In particular, is there any response from the President to the second request from the Committee Chairs: namely, that the administration fully collaborate with Faculty Governance leadership to agree on an interim plan to deal with proposed policies whose classification (administrative or educational) are in dispute. In the absence of such a response, COG discussed the formation of a group including the Provost and a number of faculty governance leaders to review policies that are being considered before they land with the Administrative Policy Group (APG). These discussions would inform the

Provost about the issues that might identify a proposed policy as academic rather than administrative. The Provost indicated that such a meeting would provide a serious opportunity for faculty leaders to help him understand the perspectives of the faculty.

COG members noted that one statement in the PCRIAP document conflicts with this idea: “Any questions about which process applies to a particular policy shall be resolved first by the Administrative Policy Group (see below) and then, if necessary, by the President.” That statement must be revised. The Provost stated that this revision should be brought up in the working group, and that he would represent that view to the APG and President. One member expressed his discomfort with circularity of giving the APG the authority to decide whether its decision-making authority was too broad.

Members of COG shared their thoughts about how the process should work. They stressed the importance of having the Provost represent faculty positions to the administration. They strongly urged transparency (like that provided in CITP meeting minutes) regarding how decisions are made about policies and noted that widespread confidence in WPI policies would depend on that level of transparency regarding APG decisions and a clear separation of administrative policy making by the APG and educational policy making by the faculty.

COG members inquired into the status of any new policies. The Provost noted that two policies have been approved by the APG and recommended to the President; nothing yet has been signed by the President. He expressed his intent to convey to the President the faculty positions on any proposed policies. COG members noted the problems with this process: the only faculty involved in the formulation of these two policies were the faculty representatives to the APG and the faculty committee chairs, whose input had been sought. COG was now discussing two policies with the Provost that they had not seen and wouldn't see until the policies had been posted; this is a dramatic change from WPI's past practice of shared governance. The Provost agreed with one member's contention that the still unresolved policies on network security and access have serious educational implications and shouldn't be pursued until a more inclusive process is in place. He said that the policy-writing was complete for this year, and that it would take more time to address the more serious issues in a collaborative way.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Kris Boudreau
Secretary, COG